

Joseph Merritt (Republican)

BIOGRAPHY

Minority Leader, Bloomfield TC, co-founded the volunteer ambulance and the WH Golf Course, currently sponsoring tax freeze for seniors and building the East Coast Greenway. Also chaired the WHB Health District.

Education: Kingswood-Oxford; Dartmouth College (Government); Masters from MIT's Sloan School of Finance (Sloan Fellow.)

A US Naval Officer (Special Operations), Joe is married to Beverlee with three children and six grandchildren; his career was business management, with 24 years as manufacturing company owner.

Semi-retired; roots include grandmother Alice Merritt, Connecticut's first Woman Senator and Congressman Schuyler Merritt (parkway.)

Essay questions

1. With shrinking resources and increasing demands on state funds, what legislative initiatives would you propose to meet the needs of economically struggling citizens?

We are in tough economic times where spending initiatives should and will be sparse. Energy needs should be an exception. We need to keep people warm by providing fuel oil to those in need. We also need to support investment in energy conservation and green energy generation.

2. Recent reports suggest that the Charter Oak Health Plan is inadequate with very few providers willing to participate. What measures would you propose to fill in the gaps for those unable to afford health insurance?

It is a difficult year financially to start any new program and the governor deserves credit for providing something for the uninsured. Start-ups are tough and it will take time to get all the wrinkles out and we need to improve the plan as we can afford to.

3. Affordable rental housing needs have increased due to sub-prime foreclosures, job losses, escalating fuel, food and electricity costs. What specific measurable initiatives would you propose to increase the supply of affordable housing and to prevent/ reduce homelessness?

Perhaps we need to come up with a plan to match the empty, repossessed houses with the homeless.

4. What will you do to help localities to get the necessary money to provide quality education for all?

There is no question education requires more money from the state even during this recession. We need to make sure it is spent wisely and the state audits how the money is being spent. I expect the most likely source of new money is Washington.

5. If elected, what single legislative initiative would be your first priority?

Energy needs to be our top priority because of its effect on climate change, the American and world economies, and our future in Connecticut. It is the challenge of the decade if not the century. A short, medium and long term energy plan would be my first initiative.

LWV Yes/No Grid Questions, Election 2008

Would you support legislation reducing the drinking age to 18?

Yes, if a reasonable plan to prevent highway carnage accompanies it.

Would you support legislation eliminating billboards on state highways in CT?

Yes

Would you support legislation requiring universal full day kindergarten?

Yes

Would you support re-organization of the probate court system?

Yes

Should the state adopt LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) environmental standards in the construction and major renovation of all state owned buildings?

Yes. I sponsored this in my town. The standards need work, however.



Joseph Merritt

Would you support legislation that could require CT compliance with the federal Real ID Act requiring changes to state drivers' licenses?

Should Connecticut adopt and fund a work program to address long neglected infrastructure deterioration?

Yes. We need to make significant investments in energy generation, energy-saving transportation, and energy-conservation generally. This would put a lot of people to work. It needs government involvement, but not necessarily direct government money or oversight.

**For more information on the
League of Women Voters of Greater
Hartford go to www.lwvgh.org.**

Check out the League of Women Voters-
Connecticut website at www.lwvct.org
for additional information on
all of election 2008.

Jonathan Harris (Democrat)

BIOGRAPHY

State Senator (2004-08). Assistant Majority Leader; Co-Chair, Human Services; Vice-Chair, Planning & Development, Regulations Review; Appropriations; Co-Chair, Aging (2005-07)

West Hartford Mayor: (2001-04). Cut government while preserving quality education & services. Helped expand commercial base including, Blue Back Square.

Boards: Seniors Jobs Bank, American School for Deaf, Noah Webster House, Bridge Family Center, Jewish Federation.

Hall High ('82). Brandeis University ('86). N.Y.U. Law ('90).

Attorney (1990-2008). Principal, Harris Collaborations (real estate) (2007-08).

Essay questions

1. With shrinking resources and increasing demands on state funds, what legislative initiatives would you propose to meet the needs of economically struggling citizens?

Aggressively use budget process I've helped implement: results based accountability (RBA). We use performance measures to cut waste while targeting funds where they payoff and save taxpayer dollars. We've used RBA successfully for early education where \$1 invested saves \$7 by the time a child reaches adulthood (avoided education and social costs).

Continue to identify other sources of revenue. I helped access untapped federal dollars to fund a plan to reduce child poverty which unaddressed, costs taxpayers billions of dollars (failing schools and prisons). Another source: By foregoing \$3 million in federal revenue, we could send \$47 million of federal funds directly to the elderly to buy prescription drugs through an existing program.

Expand tax policies that put money into people's pockets for job creation and the purchase of necessities, i.e., energy.

Provide guidance and seed money to incent private sector to offer needed services, as I helped do in establishing ten self-sustaining transportation networks for seniors and people with disabilities.

Use Rainy Day Fund which we built to an historic amount (\$1.4 billion). Use

savings strategically, to avoid tax increases and cuts which will cost taxpayers more. We must plan on a few years of tough budgets and not use too much savings in one year.

2. Recent reports suggest that the Charter Oak Health Plan is inadequate with very few providers willing to participate. What measures would you propose to fill in the gaps for those unable to afford health insurance?

Build on existing public and private plans to ensure universal access. Better use of technology, i.e., electronic records, to lower costs and help people make informed choices. Give priority to public and private programs that promote healthier lifestyles, prevention and chronic disease management. Use tax incentives to help business provide and people afford meaningful healthcare.

3. Affordable rental housing needs have increased due to sub-prime foreclosures, job losses, escalating fuel, food and electricity costs. What specific measurable initiatives would you propose to increase the supply of affordable housing and to prevent/ reduce homelessness?

Build on success of Home Connecticut law we passed. This includes incentives to municipalities to zone for higher density housing which is affordable and targets state investment to secure more private and federal funds.

Expand commitment to supportive housing (services to keep people self-sufficient are provided in home).

4. What will you do to help localities to get the necessary money to provide quality education for all?

Continue our success increasing state's share: 1999 total education funding (West Hartford) \$5.8 million – 2008 up to \$19 million. Past two years, we have secured an historic \$5 million increase.

Tax and spending reform (below).

5. If elected, what single legislative initiative would be your first priority?

Tax and spending reform affects all issues. Increase efforts to incent inter-municipal cooperation to cut local costs. Give priority for state grants and bonding to towns that cooperate and share assets and costs. As Mayor, I cut government by consolidating town and education departments. Incentives should be given for other town to make these cuts. Implement flexible mechanism to ensure



Jonathan Harris

that additional state funds yield property tax relief.

LWV Yes/No Grid Questions, Election 2008

Would you support legislation reducing the drinking age to 18?

No.

Would you support legislation eliminating billboards on state highways in CT?

Yes.

Would you support legislation requiring universal full day kindergarten?

No. Costly mandate. Target where proven effective and investment saves taxpayer dollars.

Would you support re-organization of the probate court system?

Yes.

Should the state adopt LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) environmental standards in the construction and major renovation of all state owned buildings?

Yes.

Would you support legislation that could require CT compliance with the federal Real ID Act requiring changes to state drivers' licenses?

No. Costly for results achieved.

Should Connecticut adopt and fund a work program to address long neglected infrastructure deterioration?

Yes. A targeted program would create jobs, increase competitiveness, improve safety and address other challenges, i.e., prison overcrowding and job training. Our policies should strive to achieve multiple benefits.